

The Dispatch.

ESTABLISHED FEBRUARY 8, 1864.
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PITTSBURGH, FRIDAY, FEB. 15, 1890.

TO AGENTS.

Agents wishing extras to their orders for Saturday, Sunday and Monday's DISPATCH, will have to order specially what they want not later than to-day.

THE FRENCH CRISIS.

France's political upheavals are always surprising, and the one which overturned the Floquet ministry yesterday was true to the rule of being exactly the reverse of what was expected in other quarters. The great policy of Boulanger's party has been the revision of the constitution. Yet, in the vote yesterday, it was the ministry which proposed to push on the bill for revision and the opposition which called for postponement and won.

Add to this the phenomenon of a minority overturned on an apparently trivial question of consideration, and the results of French politics seem at this distance to be paradoxical. Of course, however, the vote was full of significance to the French contestants, and was vital in showing that the ministry had lost its majority.

What will come next no man can tell, beyond the indication that France is apparently bent on demonstrating the truth of its national proverb that "it is the unexpected which happens."

THE PRODUCERS' TRUE POLICY.

A rather interesting item appeared yesterday afternoon, in the shape of a reported plan to organize the producers of crude petroleum into a corporation, the shares of which are to be paid for by the producers out of a certain percentage of their production. This property the corporation is expected to convert, as opportunity offers, into pipe lines, and other means to make them independent of the Standard.

This is virtually the plan of action which THE DISPATCH has long urged upon the producers, with the exception that we have advocated a greater scope in making the organization encourage the establishment of independent refineries. It is plain that if a competing pipe and tank system were established, so long as the Standard retained its position as the controlling purchaser of crude petroleum, it could freeze out the independent element. But, if, simultaneously with the extension of competing pipe lines, competing refineries are stimulated—not only by the encouragement of the existing ones, but by efforts to establish new ones—the interest can be placed on a basis of independence which will, in time, enable it in the language of the report, to "give the Standard the go-by."

When the Standard had control of the lever of railway discrimination it was able to choke off competing pipe lines and refineries. Now it relies upon its control of the pipe lines and its power as the chief purchaser of crude to maintain its supremacy. With opposition to it in both branches of the industry, the petroleum business ought to secure its freedom. This was, as we understand, the original purpose of the Producers' Protective Association; and if a new organization is started it will have to guard against the danger which prevented the former movement—just as a similar evil strangled the South Penna. namely, the presence among them of agents of the Standard. It is their duty to delude the independent interest into playing the great corporation's game.

How much foundation there is for the report we do not know; but we should be glad to see the petroleum producers embarking in a fair stand-up fight to secure their independence. It would be a hard fight unquestionably; but on the lines indicated it would be a winning one in the end.

A WHOPPER, SURELY.

Notwithstanding the recent enlightenment which the British public has had from Prof. Byers, Max O'Brien and other observing visitors upon the institutions and tendencies in the United States, there is still, evidently, a large capacity on the part of Cousin John to believe wonderful stories about our politics. The most remarkable of late years gotten up for his benefit is a tale that "wealthy Republicans" propose raising \$300,000,000 to bribe the Canadians into annexation. How anyone could be foolish enough to swallow this it is difficult to conceive; but British credulity must be equal to our credulity. The proposition, as reported, would not give currency to the report in a long cablegram from London.

It has been the fashion, and to some extent is yet, with a certain class of English writers and speakers to make much capital about bribery on this side; yet it is seriously to be doubted if there is more, or as much, of that in our national politics as is practiced even under the boasted British system. No doubt "influence," occasionally pernicious, has a good deal too much to do in our legislation, and as a matter of course also in civil service appointments, but money considerations are a different thing, in kind at least, if not in character.

But if Cousin John were so simple as to suppose for a moment that \$300,000,000 of bribery in a single transaction could be undertaken by "wealthy Republicans" of the United States, the slightest reflection might suffice to convince him that Yankee business shrewdness would forbid the paying of any such sum for the Canada wildlife.

A GRAVE UNDERTAKING.

In this neighborhood, as far as our observations extend, the undertakers are respectable men, skilled in their important and necessary, and we have never heard that they or the public have deemed it essential that an examination on technical matters should make it less easy for a man to become a funeral director. In Ohio, however, it appears that a different condition of affairs exists. The State Association of Undertakers has cast into the Ohio Legislature a bill to provide

for the appointment by the Governor of a commission of three practical funeral directors, before whom all undertakers must pass and secure a license before embarking in the business.

The only reason publicly assigned for this action is that many undertakers unskillfully handle bodies infected with contagious diseases. This, indeed, is a sufficient threat against the public health to call for some reform. But it is hinted that other forces are behind the bill. There has been a tendency in Ohio, we are told, to regard undertaking as a last resort. A statesman for instance who has failed of his ambition and to whom the trough of official pap is no longer accessible, has been known to seek relief in burying his fellow man. The burial of his hopes, perhaps, suggests the appropriateness of this departure. The poet, whose sweet song never get beyond the waste basket of the unattractive editor, the tailor who trusts not wisely but too much, the doctor who kills more often than he cures, and, in short, all sorts and conditions of men, who have never felt success smile, or avoid, in the face of their shocking engendering to assisting mortal clay to its last resting place. Consequently the profession of undertaking is embarrassed by the abundance of its practitioners, and the direction of Ohio's funerals has become a prey to excessive competition. The proposed law will doubtless prove a timely remedy; Ohio's undertakers will once again be happy and select; and the vested right of charging a dollar for each pair of ten-cent gloves worn by bearers will move along undisturbed by infringements of class competitors.

THE WEAK SPOT.

The formation of the Sewer Pipe Trust, which is to control the manufacture of those useful articles for drainage purposes, is announced, with the familiar feature of a central corporation which is to distribute the orders and fix the prices.

This is the fashionable method of remedying the recent prevalence of prices too low to suit the manufacturers. But our friends the manufacturers should consider what means they have of making the remedy a permanent one. If we are not mistaken there was a sewer pipe pool some years ago, which held up prices just long enough to trade in the sewer pipe business, and then cash prices were back to normal.

If the new combination has any method of keeping new concerns out of the trade, it may sustain prices above the natural level fixed by competition. But in default of any such lever advance in prices above the level at which the present concerns have done a living business for some years, will be a direct premium to the building of new factories, with the result of cut prices and further subdivision of the business so long as the combination effort lasts.

Our trading friends should take care not to be in the position of the man who lost in the end.

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